

**OKLAHOMA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH  
OFFICE OF JUVENILE SYSTEM OVERSIGHT**

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**Report Release Date: November 15, 2010**

**Review of the Death of Larandon Nichols  
of Oklahoma County, Oklahoma**

Dates and Outcome of Investigations and Actions Taken by the  
Department of Human Services; Actions Taken by the District Attorney;  
and Dates and Summary of Judicial Proceedings and Rulings of the Court

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**General Information**

On August 6, 2010, the Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) received an inquiry regarding the death of Larandon Nichols, a three year old child that was found dead in his home by his adoptive mother. At the time of his death, Larandon weighed eighteen pounds and presented with numerous cuts, scratches, bruises, and marks all over his body. In addition, Larandon appeared emaciated, his stomach appeared to be swollen, and the outline of Larandon's ribs was clearly seen by emergency personnel. Reportedly, Larandon had very thin extremities, scars to his face, legs, arms, and the core of his body. Larandon's adoptive mother, Alibra Nichols was charged with one count of felony child abuse, two counts of felony child neglect, and one count of felony enabling child abuse and one count of felony enabling child neglect in Larandon's death. Also, Larandon's adoptive mother's boyfriend, Donald Miller II was charged with felony child abuse, one count of felony enabling child abuse, and one count of felony enabling child neglect in the death of Larandon. Both were charged with the noted offenses on August 2, 2010, in Oklahoma County. The following is a summary of the actions taken by the Department of Human Services (OKDHS); the actions taken by the district attorney; judicial proceedings; and the rulings of the court, as authorized by 10 O.S., Section 7005-1.9, D and E (below).

**Authorization**

Title 10A, Section 1-6-105, B, D and E, of the Oklahoma Statutes, states:

B. When a person responsible for a child has been charged by information or indictment with committing a crime resulting in the death or near death of the child, this shall be a presumption that the best interest of the public is served by public disclosure of certain information concerning:

1. The circumstances of the investigation of the death or near death of the child; and

2. Any other investigations concerning that child, or other children while living in the same household, within:

a. three (3) years of the death or near-death, and

b. one (1) year after the death or near-death.

D. 1. At any time subsequent to seven (7) days after the date the person

responsible for the child has been criminally charged, the Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth shall, upon request, release certain information to the public within sixty (60) days of the request as follows:

- a. a confirmation shall be provided by the Commission as to whether a report of suspected child abuse or neglect has been made concerning the alleged victim or this children while living in the same household and whether an investigation has begun,
- b. confirmation shall be provided by the Commission as to whether previous reports of suspected child abuse or neglect have been made and the dates thereof, a summary of those previous reports, the dates and outcome of any investigations or actions taken by the Department [OKDHS] and the Commission in response to any previous report of child abuse or neglect, and the specific recommendation made to the district attorney and any subsequent action taken by the district attorney,
- c. the dates of any judicial proceedings prior to the death or near death of the child,
- d. recommendations submitted by the Department [OKDHS] and the Commission shall be provided in writing including recommendations made at the hearing as they relate to custody or placement of a child, and
- e. the rulings of the court.

2. Specific recommendations made by the Commission described in any progress reports of a pending case submitted to the court may be disclosed by the Commission.

E. Any disclosure of information pursuant to this section shall not identify or provide an identifying description of any complainant or reporter of child abuse or neglect, and shall not identify the name of the child victim's siblings or other children living in the same household, the parent or other person responsible for the child, or any other member of the household, other than the person criminally charged.

**Identifiers:**

Child's name: Larandon Nichols  
Child's age: three years old  
Date of Death: July 11, 2010

Alleged Perpetrators: Alibra Nichols and Donald Miller II

The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth did not become aware of this case until after Larandon's death.

Summary of Actions Taken by the Department of Human Services, Action Taken by the District Attorney; Judicial Proceedings; and the Rulings of the Court:

The OJSO reviewed the actions of the OKDHS regarding Larandon that occurred prior to his death. The OKDHS documented one referral regarding the child's family within the past three years.

## **Case History**

The OKDHS documented that Larandon was born prematurely at approximately thirty-four weeks and four days on November 27, 2006, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Further documentation found that at the time of his birth Larandon weighed six pounds and approximately three ounces and that at the time of his discharge from the hospital on December 28, 2006, Larandon weighed eight pounds and approximately three ounces.

The OKDHS documented that allegations of neglect was confirmed and that Larandon was placed in the OKDHS custody on November 28, 2006. The OKDHS also documented two failed placements of Larandon prior to his placement with Ms. Nichols and Mr. Miller on January 30, 2007. Further documentation found that the adoption of Larandon by Ms. Nichols was finalized by the Oklahoma County Juvenile Court on October 29, 2008.

### Report Received by the OKDHS Alleging Failure to Protect due to Inadequate or Dangerous Shelter and Neglect due to Lying (December 28, 2007), Oklahoma County

The OKDHS received a report regarding thirteen-month-old Larandon alleging that the home was cluttered. Also alleged was that clothes and diapers that could fit Larandon were located in the back yard. Additional allegations included that Ms. Nichols was not responsive to Larandon's needs and that Ms. Nichols' expectations regarding Larandon's physical and developmental capabilities were unrealistic; and; Ms. Nichols lied to police officers.

The OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority II investigation, with seven days to initiate contact with the alleged child victims. Those persons interviewed during the investigation were the child victims, Ms. Nichols, relatives, and two collateral witnesses.

The OKDHS documented contact at the school of a child that lived in Ms. Nichols' home on January 8, 2008. According to the documented interview the child was observed to be clean and dressed appropriately. The OKDHS also documented that the child lived in Ms. Nichols' home for three years and that the child reported that the home was not usually cluttered. In addition, the child did not report concerns or complaints.

The OKDHS documented contact with Larandon at home on January 9, 2008, and that Larandon appeared to be "on target" for his age, clean, and dressed appropriately. The OKDHS also documented that Larandon was observed to be without marks or bruises. The OKDHS further documented that the home appeared clean with no clutter or trash and that Larandon's bedroom contained appropriate bedding.

The OKDHS documented contact with Ms. Nichols at home on January 9, 2008. The OKDHS documented interview with Ms. Nichols noted that the home was observed to be clean without boxes or clutter. The OKDHS also documented that Ms. Nichols reported that she lied to police officers regarding a personal matter and that she was arrested after the police officers “got an attitude”. Reportedly, on December 12, 2007, Ms. Nichols was arrested for the offense of contributing to the delinquency of a minor/harboring a runaway and placed in the Oklahoma County Jail. In addition, Ms. Nichols was released from jail the next day. It should be noted that the OJSO did not find documentation of further prosecution regarding the arrest.

The OKDHS Report to the District Attorney documented a finding of Services Recommended.

OKDHS Case Contact Note (March 6, 2008)

The OKDHS documented that a home visit was conducted and that Ms. Nichols reported that she needed financial assistance. Reportedly, Ms Nichols was “low” on diapers and clothes for Larandon.

OKDHS Case Contact Note (May 13, 2008)

The OKDHS documented that a home visit was conducted and noted that Ms. Nichols requested that the worker provide a bed for Larandon in the home.

OKDHS Case Contact Note (January 22, 2009)

The OKDHS documented that one of the other children that lived in the home was removed from the home due to Ms. Nichols’ “personal issues”.

[The following is a summary of the reports received by the OKDHS regarding the death incident. The reports are documented as they were received by the OKDHS and may not accurately reflect the death incident.]

Second Report Received by the OKDHS Alleging Neglect/Child Death (July 11, 2010), Oklahoma County

A report was received by the OKDHS regarding the “suspicious” death of three year-old Larandon. Allegedly, Larandon “looked like a one year-old and was extremely thin”. The OKDHS Referral Information Report documented the allegation that Larandon was starved or was the victim of other foul play. The report also documented that there were two other children in the home, seven months-old and six years-old, respectfully. Reportedly, Ms. Nichols’ “woke-up”, found Larandon dead, and called 9-1-1.

The OKDHS accepted the report as a Priority I investigation, with twenty-four hours to contact the alleged child victims. The OKDHS documented that contact was made with all of the children that lived in the home, Ms. Nichols and Mr. Miller on July 11, 2010.

The OKDHS also documented that relatives and collateral witnesses were interviewed during the investigation.

The OKDHS documented that Larandon was dressed in a diaper and socks when the worker arrived at the home. Reportedly, Larandon appeared to be emaciated, his stomach was swollen, and the worker could clearly see the outline of Larandon's ribs. The OKDHS also documented that Larandon had numerous cuts, scratches, bruises, and marks all over his body. Further documentation found that skin was missing from one of Larandon's hands. Reportedly, trash and other debris were observed to be on the floor surrounding Larandon. In addition, Larandon's toddler bed supported a mattress that was ripped and uncovered. The OKDHS also documented that vomit was observed to be on the mattress and that red blood was observed to be on a "potty pad" that was located at the end of the toddler bed.

The OKDHS documented that a "foul" odor permeated throughout the home and that "piles" of trash and clothes were observed on all pieces of the furniture and in every room of the home. Reportedly, the worker could not walk more than a few steps into the bedrooms due to the clutter. In addition, an ample amount of food was observed to be in the refrigerator and freezer located in the kitchen and the small freezer located in the living room.

The OKDHS documented interview with one of the children that lived in the home noted that Ms. Nichols broke a bat when she hit Larandon after he "boo-booed on himself" and that Mr. Miller witnessed the abuse of Larandon by Ms. Nichols. The OKDHS documented interview with the child also noted that the child, Ms. Nichols, and Mr. Miller abused Larandon. Reportedly, Larandon was abused by the child at the direction of Ms. Nichols. The OKDHS documented interview further noted that Larandon was regularly "hit" and "whooped" with baseball bats, belts, hangers, and sticks. Reportedly, Larandon received the abuse all over his body including his stomach, face, feet, and hands. The OKDHS also documented that the child reported that Larandon bled from his feet and that on two separate occasions Larandon sustained marks and bruises after he was whooped. Further documentation found that the child reported that on July 10, 2010, Larandon was whooped with a stick by Ms. Nichols and by Mr. Miller. In addition, the child reported Larandon bled after he was whooped. The child also reported that (the child) hit Larandon with the stick approximately fourteen times. The OKDHS documented that the child choked Larandon on occasion. Reportedly, the child made a "choking motion" with their hands when describing how Larandon was choked. The OKDHS also documented that the child stated that, "mamma (Ms. Nichols) not saving him (Larandon) when (the child) whooped him (Larandon)".

The OKDHS documented interviews with Ms. Nichols and Mr. Miller noted that Larandon cried "a lot", wore a diaper, and did not chew but, swallowed his food. In addition, Larandon could say "mommy" and "eat. Reportedly, when asked, Mr. Miller stated that Larandon "did not call him (Mr. Miller) anything". The OKDHS documented interviews also noted that Mr. Miller slept when the children were awake and that Mr. Miller was awake when the children slept. The OKDHS documented interviews further

noted that Ms. Nichols provided the majority of the care and discipline to the children. Reportedly, Ms. Nichols stated that it was too much for her to care for the children alone and that she did “all of the mean stuff” and Mr. Miller seldom whooped Larandon.

The OKDHS documented that Ms. Nichols reported that she whooped Larandon with her flip-flop sandals, hangers, switches, and a plastic bat. The OKDHS also documented that Ms. Nichols reported that she would hit the bottom of Larandon’s feet with the bat. The OKDHS further documented that Ms. Nichols admitted that she “got carried away” when she whooped Larandon and that she stated, “It seemed like I was forever whooping him”. In addition, Ms. Nichols reported that some of her family members questioned her about Larandon’s condition and that some of the family members felt that she whooped Larandon “too hard”. The OKDHS documented that Ms. Nichols reported that she whooped Larandon “pretty good” on July 7, 2010. The documented interview with Ms. Nichols noted that Ms. Nichols was angry and whooped Larandon when he soiled his pants. The documented interview also noted that Larandon cried when Ms. Nichols whooped him and that Ms. Nichols turned her head away when she whooped Larandon because she was ashamed of her behavior. The OKDHS also documented that Ms. Nichols provided additional explanations regarding the noted injuries observed on Larandon’s body at the time of his death. Reportedly, Larandon sustained bruises when he fell-off the toilet and he sustained blisters when Ms. Nichols did not bathe him after he urinated on himself. In addition, Larandon’s feet swelled after Ms. Nichols punished him and made him stand in a corner of the home. Furthermore, Larandon “picked” the bruises and blisters, and; caused them to bleed. The additional explanations included that Ms. Nichols fell on top of Larandon on July 8, 2010, and that he fell down the stairs in the home approximately one week prior to his death. Reportedly, on July 8, 2010, Ms. Nichols heard gunfire outside of the home and tripped over Larandon when she attempted to lock the door. The OKDHS documented that Ms. Nichols weighed approximately three-hundred and seventy pounds and that Larandon weighed approximately eighteen pounds at the time of the incident. Reportedly, Ms. Nichols did not take Larandon to be medically examined when he fell down the stairs or after she fell on him, and the last time Larandon was medically examined was in 2008, during the adoption process. The OKDHS documented that Ms. Nichols reported that Larandon wore a diaper because he fell asleep and fell off of the toilet “every time” he went to the bathroom. The OKDHS also documented that she put socks on Larandon’s hands and wrapped Velcro around the socks so Larandon did not scratch his sores. Further documentation found that during the OKDHS interview, Ms. Nichols “plucked-out” her hair and that Ms. Nichols stated that she did not know if Larandon “got that from her”.

The OKDHS documented interviews with the relatives of Ms. Nichols and Mr. Miller noted that Larandon looked “healthy” in November 2009 and that Larandon looked “sick” in March 2010. Reportedly, the children appeared not to be eating and Ms. Nichols explained to the relatives that Larandon had an eating disorder and eczema. The OKDHS documented that the relatives reported that Ms. Nichols was overly aggressive with Larandon. Reportedly, Ms. Nichols cursed at Larandon, yanked him by the arm, threw pillows at him, and made him sit on the toilet for three hours.

The OKDHS documented a finding of Substantiated: Court Intervention regarding the allegations of Neglect: Death-Malnutrition as to Larandon Nichols, Inadequate and Dangerous Shelter, as to the remaining children in the home, and Failure to Thrive as to one of the remaining children in the home by Ms. Nichols and Mr. Miller. Also, Neglect: Failure to Protect as to the remaining children in the home by Mr. Miller.

Oklahoma Supreme Court Network (OSCN)

Information on the OSCN documented that on August 2, 2010, Alibra Nichols was charged with one count of felony child abuse, two counts of felony child neglect, and one count of felony enabling child abuse and one count of felony enabling child neglect in Larandon's death. Also, Donald Miller, II was charged with felony child abuse, one count of felony enabling child abuse, and one count of felony enabling child neglect in the death of Larandon. Both have a Preliminary Hearing scheduled for October 20, 2010.